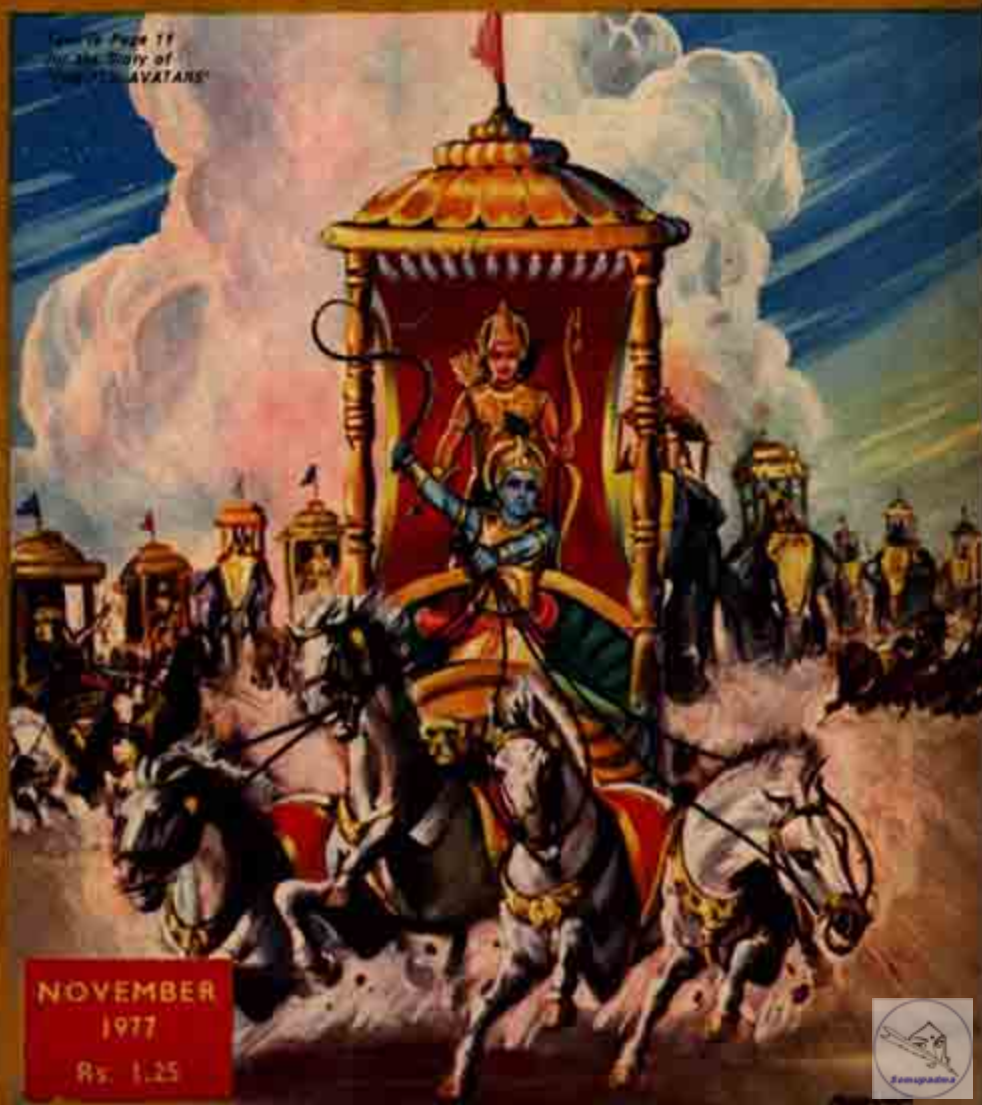


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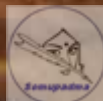
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The 10 AVATARS

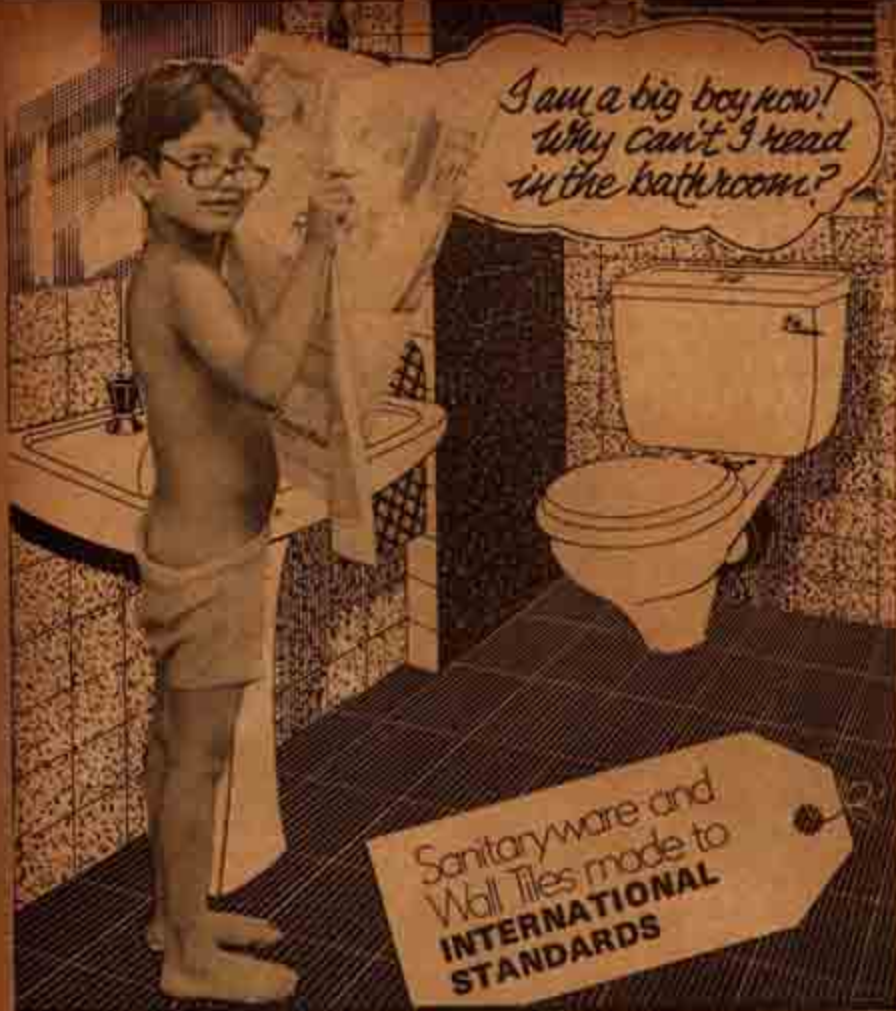


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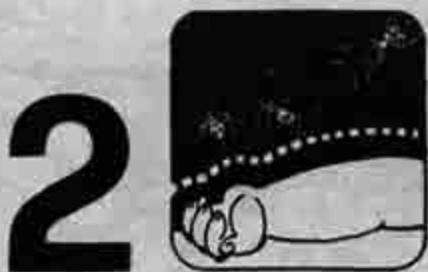
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Toothsville on the Defence

For months now, Demon Acid Killer COOH* has been threatening to overrun Toothsville. In the National Assembly, the Oral Flora pass a bill to import military hardware.



Soon the shiploads of equipment arrive.



The army loses no time in fortifying Tooth Tower...and soon their work is put to the test.



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Later... Binaca-F races in armed with a deadly weapon: Binaca Fluoride Toothpaste.



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**'Your
taste-buds
grow!'**

**'Your
taste-buds
know!'**



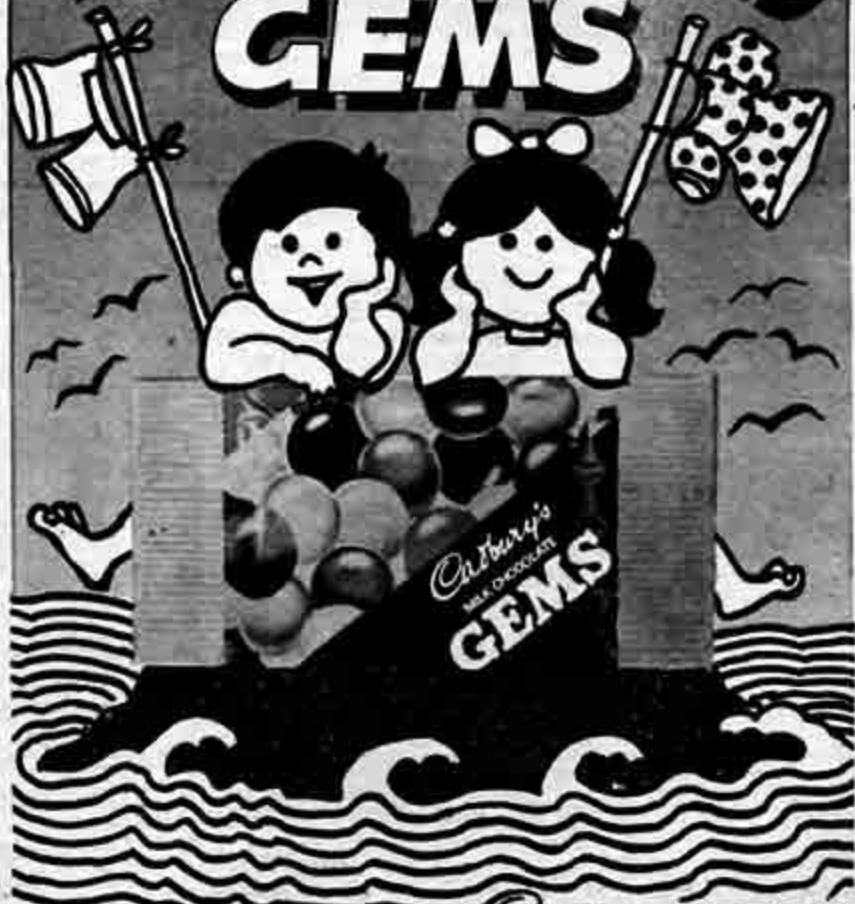
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CHANDAMAMA

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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LEGEND OF AVATARS

The legend of the Ten Avatars (see the *Story of India* in this issue) is indeed significant. A careful study of the legend may show that it is symbolic of the process of evolution. The Avatar of *Matsya* may very well mean the primeval descent of consciousness in water. *Kurma* perhaps symbolises the next stage - life evolved enough to emerge onto the land. *Varaha* is the descent of physical might and *Narasimha* is the bridge between the animal and the man. *Vamana*, the dwarf, is the twilight of man. With *Parasurama*, man begins wielding great power. *Rama* comes immediately thereafter, to give ethical values to power. *Krishna* brings great spiritual prudence for the true growth of man. *Buddha* shows the path of salvation for those who do not wish to participate in the evolutionary process. *Kalki* will be the culmination of the process, by elevating the present half-animal consciousness of man to a divine consciousness.

Maybe, the story of the earlier Avatars have come down to us from a bygone cycle of *yugas* and have got mixed up with the happenings of the present cycle of *yugas*.





GOLDEN WORDS OF YOGI

विरला ज्ञानन्ति गुणान् विरलाः कुर्वन्ति निर्बन्तनेहम् ।

विरला रणेष्ु वीराः परदुःखेनापि दुःखिता विरलाः ॥

Viralā jñānti guṇān viralāḥ kurvanti nirdhanasneham

Viralā raṇeṣu dhīrāḥ para-duḥkhenāpi duḥkhitā viralāḥ

Rare are those who appreciate the merites of others; rare are those who hold the poor in affection; rare are those who remain calm in the battle and rare are those who are distressed at the grief of others.

The Samayochita Padyamalika

सम्पदि यस्य न हर्षो विपदि विषादो रणे च वीरत्वम् ।

तं भूषणत्रयतिलकं जगदति जननी सुतं विरलम् ॥

Sampadi yasya na harṣo vipadi viṣādo raṇe ca dhīratvam

Tam bhūṣanatrayatīlakam janayati janānī sutam viralam

Rarely does a mother give birth to a son — a prid- of the three worlds — who keeps his equanimity in prosperity as well as adversity and who remains calm amidst a war.

The Panchatantram

सुलभाः पुण्या राजन् सततं प्रियवादिनः ।

अप्रियस्य च पथ्यस्य वक्ता भोक्ता च दुर्लभः ॥

Sulabhāḥ puṇyā rājan satatam priyavādīnaḥ

Apriyasya ca pathyasya vaktā bhoṭā ca dūrlabhāḥ

It is easy to come across people who always speak pleasingly, but rarely does one meet people who can speak and bear with unpalatable truths.

The Panchatantram





STORY OF INDIA— II

THE TEN AVATARS

The Supreme Lord has three aspects. As Brahma he has created this universe; as Vishnu he sustains it, as Shiva he destroys for sake of new creation. Vishnu, in order to keep the wheels of progress running, has to incarnate on the earth again and again. Once when an old creation was submerged under a great deluge, Vishnu incarnated as Matsya, the Fish, and saved the king and seer, Manu and seven rishis, and some other creatures, pulling their boat to the safety of the Himalayan peak. Manu, through his austerities, created the world of living creatures again.

The Vedas which Brahma had uttered for the guidance of mankind, had been stolen by a demon who hid under the sea. The Avatar Fish killed the demon and restored the Vedas to Manu.





The gods and the demons once decided to churn the ocean for nectar. They fetched Mount Mandar to serve as the stick and persuaded the snake-king Vasuki to serve as the rope. But the mountain sank. Knowing how important it was for the gods to have the nectar if they were to win victory over the demons, Vishnu incarnated as Kūrma, a giant turtle, and kept the mountain afloat holding it on his back.

Again a vast deluge swallowed up the entire earth. The presiding spirit of the earth, Bhudevi, was lost in the waters the interior of which was guarded by a terrible demon, Hiranyaksha. Vishnu incarnated as Varaha, the boar, and killed the demon and rescued Bhudevi.



The slain Hiranyaksha's brother, Hiranyakashyipu, hated Vishnu. But his young son, Prahlada, was a great devotee of the Lord. One day, upon Prahlada claiming that God was present everywhere, the demon-king smashed a pillar by kicking it, challenging his son to show God's presence there. At once Vishnu manifested as Narasimha—the man-lion—and clawed the arrogant demon to death.

Prahlada's grandson, Bali was a mighty king who conquered heaven and drove away the gods. His greatest weakness was his pride. He announced that whoever asked anything of his will get it. Vishnu, as *Vamana*, a dwarfish Brahmin, asked of his space enough to keep his feet. Upon Bali allowing him to keep them wherever he liked, *Vamana* covered the entire earth and heaven with his two feet. From his navel emerged a third leg.



Bali showed his head. With his third foot, *Vamana* pressed him down to the nether world.

Those who were mighty proved a menace to the meek. The Kshatriyas the ruling tribe became so mad with power that they harassed the sages and rishis. Vishnu took birth as a rishi's son and became known as *Parasurama*. He destroyed the tyrants with his 'Parasu' or axe. Humility and good sense were restored.

Parasurama was followed by *Rama*, who through his exemplary life, taught men the ethical values. He showed how one should be obedient to one's father, loving to one's brothers, faithful to one's consort and protector of one's followers and subjects. He was valiant as well as compassionate.





As the Avatar, *Krishna*, the Lord directed the triumph of truth over falsehood. He taught how a true devotee must act not according to his ego, but as an instrument of the Divine. His words to Arjuna, known as the Gita, have been an immortal source of inspiration to the seekers.

In his incarnation as *Buddha*, the Lord taught non-violence and showed the path of salvation for those who were disgusted with the life vulnerable to disease, ageing and death.



Man is still beset with beastly traits. The tenth Avatar of Vishnu, *Kalki*, will destroy such forces from the world which are responsible for retarding the progress of man towards a Life Divine.





THE POSSESSED

The people of Yadavpur, a small village at the foot of the hill, were a simple folk. They earned their living by selling milk and butter in the market on the other side of the hill.

There was a temple on the hill. Whenever the villagers crossed the hill, they bowed to the goddess and passed some time in the temple.

A vagabond of a distant town who knew these people to be naive and good-natured, one day climbed to the temple and waited for the villagers to return from the market. He had with him a young man as his assistant.

When the villagers approached the temple, the vagabond star-

ted romping and shouting. The villagers were surprised. But soon the vagabond gave them to understand that he had been possessed by the goddess. He shouted, "I must have a goat as sacrifice. Otherwise I will bring about a havoc in the village."

The villagers brought him a goat in a few hours.

Next morning the headman of the village asked the vagabond, "What happened to the goat?"

"The goddess ate it up completely," was the vagabond's reply. The villagers began to look upon the vagabond as a very gifted priest with whom the goddess felt quite free!

The goddess had never



manded a goat earlier. Now, not only did she express a desire to have a goat, but also she ate it up physically which no other deity of any other temple is known to have done!

Two or three days later, the vagabond demanded yet another goat on behalf of the deity. The villagers readily met the demand. It was repeated a few days later and again it was duly met.

Soon thereafter the headman happened to visit the town. There he saw, by chance, the vagabond's assistant selling to a butcher the last goat they had given for the deity.

Instantly the headman understood the nature of the man who pretended to be possessed. But he knew that if he would declare the fellow to be a cheat, the villagers would not believe him

easily. So, he decided upon a different course of action.

Two days later, when the villagers were returning from the market, the headman himself started romping and yelling before the temple as if he had been possessed by the goddess. He then said in a eerie voice, "Throw out this fellow who has been staying in my temple. Otherwise I will bring ruin to the village."

The vagabond left the temple at once.

"But the headman was only pretending to be possessed!" murmured his assistant on the way.

"Right, my boy! But if we say so, the villagers may very well think that I too was pretending! The best course to follow is to escape!" replied the vagabond.



MIRA BAI

Although surrounded by the desert of Rajasthan, beautiful was the village of Koorki and magnificent was the palatial building of Rao Ratan Singh—the younger brother of the ruler of Merta.

But nothing was more beautiful or more magnificent than the sweet little daughter of Rao Ratan. When she danced clapping her tiny hands and moving her bejewelled feet rhythmically, a hundred hearts danced. She was the charm of the whole village.

One evening, a marital procession was passing by the palace, with the bride and the bridegroom at its centre, flutists and drummers leading it. The child witnessed the procession from her balcony with rapt attention. When it had passed, she came running down to her grandpa, Dudaji, a grand old Rajput, and demanded, "Why don't you arrange for my marriage?"

"But aren't you too small to make a bride?" asked the loving grandpa:

"No, I am not!" replied the

child.

"And we have to find out the best bridegroom of all for a princess like you. It will take time!" commented the smiling friends of Dudaji.

But no answer would satisfy the girl. She must marry forthwith—she insisted.

In a nook of the house relaxed an old traveller. He was attracted by the child. He came forward and looked into the child's eyes. A mysterious smile played on his lips. Yes, he had at last met the right person.

"Come, my daughter, come to me," said the old man. Next moment he showed her an idol—an image of Lord Krishna—and said, "Here is your bridegroom. Don't you recognise him—your Giridhar Gopal? Come, take him. He is yours forever."

The girl remained looking at the idol. She was under a spell as though. The idol indeed seemed to her to be known for ages.

Krishna! Giridhar Gopal!!
Where were you hiding all these



days?

The girl suddenly sprang to her feet. She took hold of the idol and at once ran away into her room.

Those who witnessed the scene were amused. They laughed. The only person to look grave was the old man. He sighed and, tears rolling down his cheeks, left the palace.

He was a great sage, Raidas. He knew that his days on the earth were numbered. He was looking for a worthy person whom he could entrust with the idol. In Rao Ratan's daughter he had recognised the soul who deserved the deity.

And the girl—Mira—was alone with the idol in her room, weeping and laughing and talking to her Krishna. Maids came and called her to dinner. But she would not stir. Even her dear mother could not take her away from her idol.

And even though years passed, Mira did not change. She was now a beautiful maiden. There were many princes seeking her hand in marriage. But she had only one answer, "I am already married to Krishna. How can I marry someone again?"

Her parents were worried. They prevailed upon her until

she gave up. She was married to Bhojraj, the prince of Mewar.

She went over to her husband's palace at Chittor, but without forgetting to take her idol with her. A crisis arose on her very first day at Chittor. It was evening. Mira was engrossed in worshipping her deity when her mother-in-law sent for her. She must participate in the worship of the family deity.

Mira was in no condition to hear the command, but the members of the family, including her husband, took it as an insult to them. The infuriated Bhojraj rushed into her chamber. But he stood stupefied at the threshold. To see Mira lost in trance before her Krishna was a divine sight.

Bhojraj's wrath gave way to a deep sense of respect for his wife. Soon, he built a beautiful shrine inside the palace for her to instal and worship her Krishna.

There were people in the palace staff who could feel the greatness of Mira. There were devotees of Krishna in the city too. Soon they began to collect in front of the shrine when, in the evening, Mira worshipped Krishna, singing her sweet prayers in a melody hitherto

unknown. Mira was hardly aware of others' presence. She saw her Lord and Lord alone.

But, respectful though Bhojraj was towards her, he realised that Mira had no interest in the world. She was dutiful towards her husband and submissive too. But that was not enough to satisfy Bhojraj. His sister Uda and stepbrother Vikram were mean and jealous. They detested Mira, for, they thought that she was harming the dignity of the family by singing and dancing in public. They inspired their brother to take another wife.

Mira was informed of her husband's fresh marriage when

the new bride was about to arrive. But far from expressing shock or surprise, she went out to welcome the bride and gave her all the love due to a younger sister. Bhojraj was moved.

This was in the early part of the 16th century. Soon Bhojraj had to join the other princes of Rajasthan in an expedition against some powerful invaders. He returned to his palace mortally wounded. He breathed his last while Mira nursed him. Words of gratefulness for Mira were his last words.

Thereafter life became a continuous trial for Mira. Her fame as an enlightened soul was spreading. Vikram who as-





cended the throne of Mewar saw that the people of Chittor respected Mira more than himself. He was furious.

He and Uda decided to put an end to Mira's life. One day, as Mira would sit down for worship, a sackful of fresh flowers reached her. She was delighted. But as soon as she picked up the flowers, a few snakes, terribly poisonous, emerged from the sack. However, they slithered away quietly.

Vikram and Uda took a far more cruel step this time. One day, when Mira was alone in the shrine, Uda approached her with a cup of poison. As she

would enter the shrine, she heard Mira singing,

At times I think,

It is poison I should drink!

Uda was taken aback. Has Mira come to know of her design? But she dispelled such fear from her mind and entered the room and asked Mira to drink from the cup. "It is the ruler's order," she said in a stern voice.

"I will do as your ruler has wished, but it is the Supreme Ruler's wish that will be fulfilled," said Mira and she drank the poison.

Uda waited with bated breath to see Mira collapsing. But Mira went on singing!

Uda trembled and soon fell at Mira's feet.

But time had come for Mira to leave Chittor. She must go to Mathura, sanctified by Krishna's memory. From Mathura she went to Dwarka where Krishna had spent his last days.

Wherever she went, she aroused instant love and respect in the hearts of devotees. Many saw in her the aura of Krishna.

Once when a guru refused to see her because he never saw a woman, she remarked, "Well,



I was under the impression that for Vaishnavas there was only one man—Krishna. It is amazing that there is a second man!"

When the guru heard the comment he at once came out and greeted Mira with humility.

Mira passed her days in the ecstasy of devotion, composing new lyrics and singing them in Krishna's temple at Dwarka.

But Chittor was going through bad days. Vikram had been killed by a young man whose father he had killed. Calamities visited the city and the people thought that they were the consequences of the rough treatment meted out to Mira.

The people deputed a group of Brahmins to persuade Mira to return to Chittor. The delegation pleaded with Mira with ardent passion. They would

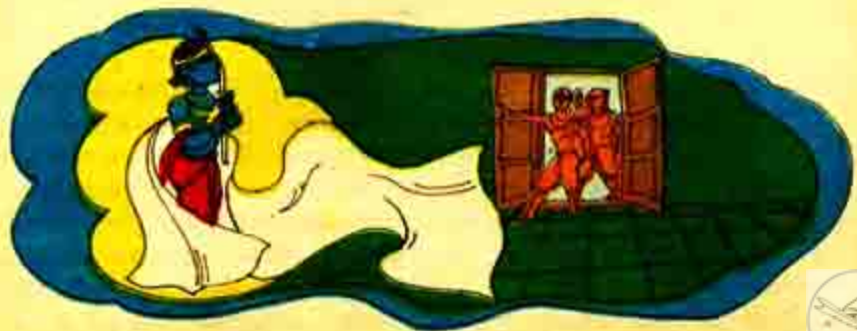
not go without taking her back with them. They fasted in front of the temple.

At last Mira told them that she would seek the Lord's opinion. She interned herself in the inner chamber, with the deity.

The Brahmins guarded the door so that she could not give them the slip. A long time passed. Impatient, they pushed open the door.

But where was Mira? She had disappeared. The deity stood wrapped up in her saree. She had immersed in him!

Thus ended the life of a great soul, but the compositions she has left are immortal, both for their profundity and lyricism. They have continued to nurture the flame of Bhakti in innumerable hearts. Out of them have been born many a mystic poet.





THE BEWILDERED GIANT

There was a flood of moonlight. The wood looked enchanted. So did the glade and the silver brook that cut across it.

The princess stood alone, holding on to a *chompuc* tree overflowing with golden flowers which delighted the region.

Suddenly, what should she behold but a giant popping up from the nearby slope.

The princess sighed.

"Why did you sigh?" demanded the demon.

"To be frank, I least expected to see a giant on such a wonderful night," said the princess. After yet another sigh, she said, "In fact I was expecting the prince of the horizon."

"Prince of the horizon? The

name sounds so familiar! Who is he?" queried the giant.

"All I know is, he is a brave and charming prince. There was a prophecy that he will come to our rescue. But now all seems over!" said the princess sadly.

The giant too looked sad. "I'm sorry—and no less surprised that you do not faint at the sight of a giant like me," he observed.

"What do you think of yourself? Only if you knew the sort of giant we had to face earlier! Why do you think we are living in a forest? It is because a terrible giant laid waste our capital. Many were devoured by him, many escaped. He had



special fancy for the royal brood. That is why myself and my parents had to flee the castle," explained the princess.

"Your story sounds quite familiar to me. Is n't that rather strange? I feel sort of bewildered. But, more than that, I'm hungry, as hungry as a giant!"

"No wonder, for you are a giant," the princess reminded him.

"I'm, indeed. But do you by any chance know what is the usual menu for a giant at night? Something queer has happened to my memory. I don't remember a thing!" lamented the giant.

"I never knew that a giant could joke. Well, I know very well, as do you, that I cannot escape. Eat me if you must. But please promise that you will go away satisfied with me alone, you will spare my poor parents," said the princess while struggling with two obstinate tears.

"Eat you?" shrieked the giant. "Eat you?" he shrieked again at a higher scale of his voice and, "Eat you—the most b-beau-beautiful, the most s-sw-sweet princess?" he yelled at the highest pitch before breaking into tears.

The princess stood stunned.



"This is strange! Whoever has heard of a weeping giant? At least not I. Nor have I read about one in the books of fairytales," she murmured to herself.

Even a stranger thing was happening before her eyes. As the giant wept, he seemed to be getting smaller in size.

"You must stop weeping. I've already started believing you. You certainly don't mean to eat me. But you have to eat something, after all. Wait, my parents have gone to sleep. It should be easy for me to bring my share of the dinner for you."

The princess darted off and





returned with some fruits and a tumblerful of milk.

"Do you know? Trees around our hut would lean down so that we can pluck their fruits easily. A wild cow appears before our hut and continues to low until we have milked her. Such is the climate of love that prevails in this forest. No wonder that even a giant—no doubt you are a gentleman giant—should feel against eating me!" observed the princess.

The giant had already gulped down the milk and was busy munching the fruits, all the while blinking at the princess, as if trying to understand what she

was saying. And as soon as he finished eating everything, he broke into a fairly loud wail—and began further reducing in size.

"What ails you, gentleman giant?" asked the princess.

"What a nasty giant I am! I wolfed down your entire dinner!" he sobbed out.

"I know that people pale and thin with weeping. But I never knew that one could reduce all round in size, like a melting snow ball, by shedding tears," remarked the princess.

"I am quite bewildered myself," said the giant, still weeping and reducing faster than before. Soon he looked no bigger than a toy.

"It is time you stopped weeping altogether. Otherwise hardly anything of you will remain," cautioned the princess.

"Really?" the giant not only stopped weeping, but also sported a smile. And to the great surprise of the princess, he soon began to laugh. And now that he was a wee toy of a giant, his laughter sounded like the twangs of a veena.

"What is there to laugh at the prospect of your getting reduced to the vanishing point?" asked the princess.



"Why? Don't you see the point? If I vanish I won't have to gobble up your dinner! You won't have to famish on my account!" replied the giant and he laughed even more ravingly, his laughter now sounding like the notes of a flute.

He frolicked and romped like a squirrel. And before the eyes of the amazed princess, a strange change came over him. He turned into a bird.

"Now I understand," he whistled. "When a giant weeps, he diminishes, when he laughs, he changes into a bird."

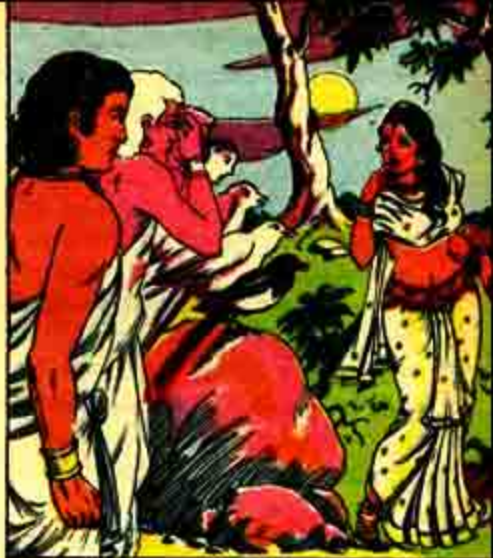
"You can't imagine how sweet you look," said the princess dancing and clapping her hands. "I will like you to remain with me forever. I will feed you with the best of fruits."

"Only a little piece would do, sweet princess, and I will love to remain with you. But still I feel a bit bewildered..."

"You will sing to me, sweet bird, and I will sing to you too," said the princess enthusiastically.

"Will you? Please do, sweet princess, maybe, my bewilderment will be over if you sing," said the bird eagerly.

The princess began to sing. It was a song about the moonlit



night and the twinkling stars, about a moon who was all smiles and a little cloud which had lost its way ...

The princess, for a while, had fixed her gaze on the sky as she sang.

"Look here, princess, I'm no more bewildered!"

The voice now sounded entirely human—the best sort of it.

The princess turned to look and what should she behold but a handsome youth smiling at him.

"Don't tell me that a giant turns into a young man when he listens to a song," said the



princess. And she observed to her great thrill that the young man's appearance squarely fitted the vision she had of the prince of the horizon.

"He does, O princess, if he was originally a young man who had been changed into a giant," the young man explained with a soft bow and said further, "I am the prince of the horizon. I had to accept a spell and grow into a giant myself so that I could kill the real giant that wrought havoc in your kingdom. I killed him all right—and let me hurry to inform you that your land and castle are restored to you—but then I forgot who really I was. It is you who restored me to my true life!"

The prince bowed in gratitude.

"But is it not you who destroyed the giant and restored us to our true life?" murmured the princess as she bowed in gratitude.

They talked and talked till the king and the queen woke up. And a few days later, after they had married, they paid a visit to the forest one moonlit night and it so happened that both of them muttered simultaneously, "I feel a bit bewildered!"

And it so happened that looking amused at each other, both simultaneously asked, "Why?"

And it so happened that both replied simultaneously, "I wonder if I deserved you!"

—Manoj Das



A WAY OF GROWING RICH

Mohandas was a wealthy money-lender. He gave loans to people against deposits of ornaments and other valuable things. If a customer failed to pay back the loan along with heavy interest in time, he lost his property.

But Mohandas lived like a poor man, spending no more on his food and comforts than any average man in the village.

One day Ramu, a poor villager, met him and proposed to give him five rupees if he allowed him to have a glimpse of his wealth. Mohandas was surprised, but he knew that Ramu was very honest and he could not have had any ill motive. What is more, the offer of five rupees was quite alluring for Mohandas. He opened his chest loaded with jewellery, stacks of currency notes and coins.

"There are twenty years of labour and patience behind this treasure," said Mohandas proudly.

Suddenly Ramu laughed and said, "How lucky I am that I grew as rich as yourself with only five rupees and no labour!"

"What do you mean?" asked Mohandas.

"Why! You do nothing with your wealth but see it. I too have seen it. If you are rich, I too am rich!" replied Ramu.





THE RIGHT TO ADVISE

The little prince was no more naughty than a witty child should be!

He played pranks on the ministers and the courtiers—and even on the king himself. But they all grinned and bore with him—for they all loved him.

The one before whom the prince behaved like a sweet little lamb was a hermit who lived close by a shrine a mile away from the palace. The king and the queen paid visits to him from time to time and the prince accompanied them. The king and the queen prostrated themselves to the hermit and so did the prince. When

the hermit spoke, the prince heard him with rapt attention.

But, back at the palace, the prince was his old self again—frolicking like a kitten and laughing like a gurgling torrent.

All were sad when such a jolly prince took to bed. He did not laugh any more, nor did he talk. His eyes were dim and his voice was feeble.

Great physicians examined him with great attention. They told the pensive king and queen, "There is nothing to worry. Our medicine should cure him in a fortnight. All he has to do is to refrain from taking sweets!"

But sweets were the only stuff



the prince was taking then. His sick palate relished no other item. The king and the queen pleaded with the child to give up taking sweets, but he would not listen to them. The minister and the courtiers implored him to forget sweets for a few days, but he would not even look at them.

"Maybe, if the hermit asks the boy to go without sweet, he would do so," whispered the queen to the king.

"Yes, that was quite possible," agreed the king. He galloped to the hermit's hut himself and requested him to give the necessary advice to the

boy.

"Will the boy's condition deteriorate if you wait for a few days?" asked the hermit.

"No, the physicians say there is no such fear," replied the king.

"Then, please meet me three days later," said the hermit.

The king returned to the palace, hopeful. On the fourth day he met the hermit again.

"Allow me three more days and I will surely do as you wish," said the hermit.

The king was surprised, but he went back quietly.

Three days later the king and the queen went to meet the



hermit again. The prince too was carried there in the palanquin, along with his mother.

The hermit welcomed them. The sick prince looked delighted in the hermit's presence.

"My boy, I have a request to make. Will you comply with it?" the hermit asked the prince.

"I will, O great soul!" replied the prince.

"You must refrain from taking sweets for a fortnight," said the hermit.

"I will, O great soul" promised the prince.

All were happy. True to his word, the prince gave up taking sweets and he completely recovered in a fortnight.

One day the king met the

hermit alone and said, "I have not been able to understand why you waited for six days before giving that small advice to the prince."

The hermit smiled and said, "O king, I was in the habit of taking sweets myself. After you asked me to advise the prince to give up taking sweets, I gave it up first myself. But after three days I found that although I was not taking sweets, I had nevertheless an attachment for them. During the next three days I did my best to get over the attachment. Only then I earned the right to advise the prince to give up taking sweets."

The king felt overwhelmed at the hermit's reply.



THE ELEPHANTINE PUMPKIN

Chatur Singh and Sujan Singh were neighbours. Chatur was a poor farmer. Sujan a wealthy landlord.

Chatur produced in his field a gigantic pumpkin. He carried it to the king and made a present of it to him. The courtiers hailed the fruit as elephantine. The happy king rewarded Chatur with a hundred gold mohurs.

Sujan thought to himself, "If with an elephantine pumpkin Chatur could get a reward of a hundred mohurs, I can certainly bag a thousand gold mohurs if I present a real elephant to the king!"

He bought a baby elephant at a high price and gifted it to the king.

"How do I reward this fellow?" the king asked his minister. "My lord! A man who can afford an elephant does not expect reward in terms of money. Let us make a gift of the elephantine pumpkin to him."

Sujan Singh had to hire two labourers to carry the present home.





The Giant and the Egg

"My lord! There is a strange object lying in the garden," the malis of the royal garden informed the King of Swarnagriha one morning. At first the King did not pay any attention to the information. But the malis repeated their report and the King got curious.

The king sent his officers to the garden. What should the officers see but a huge egg! Soon it burst open. Out came an infant giant.

The king took a fascination for the being. It was nurtured in the palace itself.

But as time passed, it proved to be a menace. It grew very fast and consumed larger and larger quantity of food. Its

appetite knew no end. But the king did not grudge that. What worried him was that the giant was growing much eager to have a taste of human flesh. Twice it caught hold of two different palace servants and was about to devour them when they were rescued by others.

The king ordered the giant to be kept in a solitary cell. But it tried to break away. One day the king told him, "Listen, fellow, it is time you went away to the land of giants. We have suffered you sufficiently."

"No, my lord, I will be here, with you," replied the giant.

The king did not know what to do. He did not like the idea of killing the creature. How-



ever, the court-magician gave him a counsel which appealed to him. He called the giant to his side and said, "I will put you to a test. If you pass, you remain here. If you fail, you must depart to the land of giants."

"What is the test, my lord?" queried the giant.

"You must succeed in making an egg stand upright on a table," replied the king.

"That should be easy. I belong to the species of egg-giants. It should not be difficult for me to handle an egg in the way I like. I accept the condition," said the giant.

"And you must act according to the condition, won't you?" asked the king.

"My lord! We egg-giants never go back on our word," asserted the creature.

Next day the giant was led to the dining table. He was given an egg. He tried his best to keep it in a standing position on the table, but failed.

Then the king took it and tried to do the same thing. He succeeded on the very first attempt. The giant looked at the egg standing upright with great surprise and quietly left the palace. He was no more seen in the kingdom.

"My lord! How did you perform the miracle?" queried the minister.

The king smiled and removed the table-cloth. Under it, at one place, was spread a spoonful of salt. The king had kept the egg on the table-cloth at that particular spot. That explained how the egg stood vertically.

—A. C. Sorcer, Magician





DON QUIXOTE

In a certain village in Spain lived a gentleman who was very fond of the tales of the ancient knights. He even sold a part of his property to buy books on the valorous deeds of the heroes.

As years passed, a strange fascination overtook him: he must become a knight himself and protect such men and women who were in distress. Luckily, in his house lay a suit of armour dating back to the days of his great-grandfather. He put it on and calling himself Don Quixote, set out into the wide world.

A knight must have as his companion and attendant a squire. Don Quixote induced a naive villager named Sancho Panza to follow him, promising him the kingdom of an island when he would have conquered for himself an empire.

While Don Quixote rode his old horse, Sancho followed him

on an ass.

Soon a cluster of windmills attracted Don's attention. Extremely anxious to experience some adventure, Don took them as a horde of giants and rushed upon them, shouting, "Stand your ground, ignoble creatures, and fly not basely from a single knight who dares encounter you all!"

But the wheel's motion broke his lance and threw Don and his poor horse several feet away.

Sancho tried to make him see sense. But Don had no doubt in his mind that a sorcerer had changed the giants into windmills.

He had barely recovered from his humiliation in the hands of the 'giants' when he saw two armies, raising clouds of dust, about to face each other.

They were in fact only two flocks of sheep. But Don decided to come to the weaker side's rescue and charged into one of



the flocks killing or wounding a number of bleating sheep. At first bewildered, the shepherds soon used their slings against the valiant knight who fell from his horse.

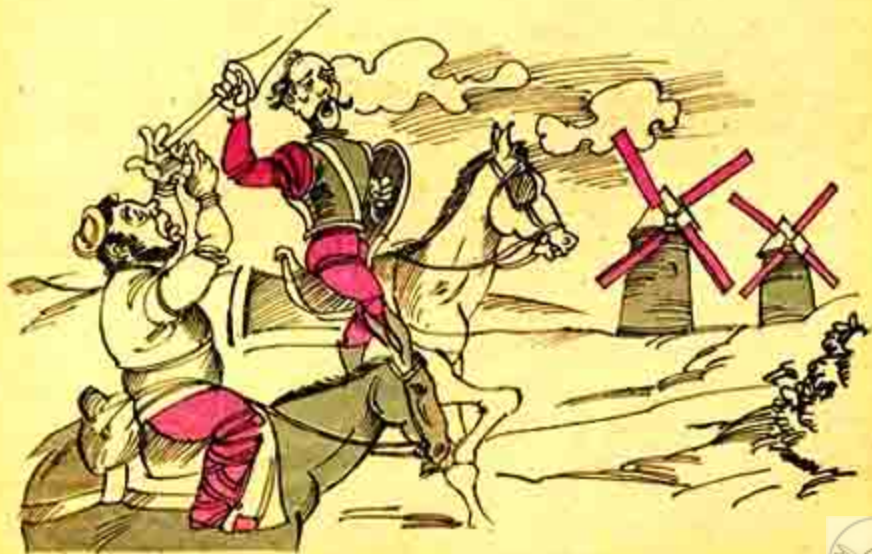
Such adventures only reduced the knight to utmost misery and some of his well-wishers were determined to bring him back home. According to their plan, while Don was rambling amidst the hills, a lady met him and introducing herself as a princess in distress, prayed for his help.

Don readily agreed to come

to her rescue. They reached an inn where his friends were waiting. At night, donning disguise, they took hold of Don and forced him into a cage. The knight is at last carried back home, a prisoner in the cage, drawn by oxen.

The great knight, however, did not live long. The adventures proved too much for him.

Don Quixote, written by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616) is enjoyed both as a satire and as a sympathetic study of the eccentric.





DEALING WITH THE NEIGHBOUR

Biren was the greatest miser in the village. But his son Sudhir was a young man of a different nature.

Biren's neighbour, Ratnakar, was a farmer of modest means. But he was certainly cleverer than the wealthy Biren.

Biren had a huge old tamarind tree on his land, bordering Ratnakar's compound. The tree remained leaning towards Ratnakar's house. The monsoon was approaching. Ratnakar feared that it might fall on his house if there was a strong gust.

One morning he met Biren and said, "I am most grateful to you for the tamarind pods. I have been getting at least a sackful of them everyday."

"But they are mine!" observed Biren.

"That is why I feel grateful

to you! The tree is just showering its love on my house!"

The same afternoon Biren cut down the tree.

Biren had a naughty dog. It harassed passers-by, particularly children. But the day it chased Susheela, Ratnakar's daughter, he decided to act.

He met Biren in the morning and said, "I do not know how to express my gratefulness to you. But for your dog I would have been reduced to poverty."

"How?" queried Biren.

"Last night burglars were about to carry away whatever money and other valuables I had in my house. Your dog gave them such a chase that they escaped leaving the booty behind," replied Ratnakar.

Biren grew grave. He will feed the dog, but it must serve



his neighbour! He despatched the dog to his farm house.

Ratnakar's daughter, Susheela, was a girl of beauty and virtues. Sudhir, Biren's son, desired to marry her. Ratnakar too knew very well that Sudhir was a nice boy. But both knew that Biren would refuse to entertain the proposal.

Sudhir was willing to leave his own home for the sake of Susheela. But Ratnakar asked him to have patience.

One day Biren observed how Ratnakar was keeping himself busy decorating his house.

"What is the matter?" he asked Ratnakar.

Ratnakar led him to a lonely

nook and whispered, "I had taken my family to a Shiva temple, miles away. The famous zamindar of Vishalpur, with his wife, had also paid a visit to the temple. The zamindar's wife took a fascination for Susheela. She wants Susheela to marry their son. The zamindar is paying a visit to me to broach the proposal formally. But please keep it a secret, for the zamindar does not wish to make his visit public at this stage."

Biren's face paled. Ratnakar left him. Soon a palanquin arrived at Ratnakar's house and a dignified-looking man got down and was warmly received



by Ratnakar.

Biren could not hear their talk. But he stood there, visualising in his imagination the great marital procession that will take place when Susheela would get married to the zamindar's son. Ratnakar will go high in the public esteem. In contrast, his own position was bound to go down.

The zamindar, while leaving, was heard telling Ratnakar, "You should pull down your hut and build a pukka house!"

"How can I, sir? I am but a poor farmer!" said Ratnakar.

"Well, my friend, leave that to me. I will do the needful!" was the zamindar's promise.

Biren felt as if his legs were paralysed. How would his own house look near Ratnakar's pukka building?

As soon as the guest was

gone, Biren dragged Ratnakar into his own house and said imploringly, "My brother, I have a request to make. But first promise that you will comply with it!"

"I promise," said Ratnakar, feigning surprise.

"I want Susheela as my son's wife!" said Biren.

"But..."

"You have promised to comply with my request," reminded Biren.

"But I cannot give any dowry!"


"Who cares for dowry? I don't want even a broomstick from you!" asserted Biren.

"I must send a No to the zamindar," muttered Ratnakar.

Of course, that was not necessary, for the man who acted as the zamindar was one of his chums!



THREE ARCHERS



Dark was the night but for the intermittent flashes of lightning. From time to time it rained and gusts of cool wind swept across the vast cremation ground. Jackals howled and there was also weird laughter from super natural beings. But King Vikram did not swerve. He brought down the corpse from the tree-top and putting it astride on his shoulder, began to walk.

Soon the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, you are no doubt a man of great talent. But at times it becomes difficult to determine who was the most talented man in a group of gifted people. Take the example of the three archers. Let me tell you their story. That should give you some relief."

The vampire went on: In a certain village lived an archer, who could discharge arrows by both right and left hands at the



same time and shoot down flying birds—two at a time. People compared him to the legendary Arjun for his skill in archery and in course of time he came to be called as Arjun.

Arjun often wondered if there was a greater archer than himself in the world. He decided to go out on a journey into different lands.

And as he wandered, he came to a place where some sort of a festival was going on. One of the attractions of the festival was a contest in archery. There Arjun saw a stranger archer. He was blind from his birth. But he could take accurate aim

at a bell when it rang.

"I know of men who have practised striking a target blindfolded, following sound, but I never knew that one blind right from his birth could have developed such skill," Arjun told the blind man, congratulating him.

When the blind man understood that Arjun was out to see how many talented archers were there in the world, he decided to accompany him.

After walking on for a few days the two archers entered a forest that spread along the frontiers of the kingdom of Dharmapuri. Soon Arjun's eyes met with a strange sight. A handless man held a bow by the toes of his left foot and shot an arrow by the help of his mouth and yet succeeded in killing a bird that sat on a tree. When the blind man heard what Arjun saw, he too was amazed.

The two archers congratulated the handless man for his feat. Then Arjun said, "Why not we three meet the King of Dharmapuri and demonstrate our skill before him? He will of course be impressed and give us a heavy reward.

"How should we divide the reward?" asked the handless



man.

"Why! We can share the reward equally!" replied Arjun.

"No. The major share must be mine. No doubt, mine is the most wonderful feat," claimed the handless man.

A tribal woman who happened to pass by them and who overheard their talk, remarked, "I see, one among you is handless; another is blind. The third man can easily decamp with the entire reward!"

"You mischievous woman, how dare you attribute such a motive to me?" shouted Arjun.

"But she seems to be a wise woman," observed the handless man and he asked, addressing the woman, "Can you say who among us is the greatest archer?"

"I can, if you three demonstrate your skill before me," said the woman.

The three agreed to it. Arjun shot two arrows simultaneously, bringing down two birds from a flying covey of birds. The blind man concentrated on the chirping of a bird on a tree and took aim and killed it. The handless man chose a hanging fruit as his target and hit it with an arrow which he discharged by the help of his foot and mouth.



"Now, tell us, who is the greatest archer among us?" asked the handless man, proudly.

"Arjun is the greatest archer; the blind man comes next," replied the woman as she prepared to leave.

"What nonsense do you speak! What do you understand of archery?" ranted the handless man.

The woman turned back, her face flushing in anger.

"See what I understand of archery," she said and she borrowed a bow and an arrow from one of them. On the branch of a nearby tree sat a pair of birds.



"Observe, how much space is there between the two birds," she said again. Next moment she let her arrow fly. It went at lightning speed and passed through the meagre space between the two birds. The birds were startled at the hissing sound, but they could not understand what really happened.

The woman then left the scene. Arjun and the blind man too walked away in a different direction, giving up the idea of going to the king's court.

The vampire paused for a second and demanded, "Tell me, O King, why did the tribal woman adjudge Arjun as the

best archer? And why did Arjun and the blind man suddenly give up their plan of demonstrating their skill before the king? O King, if you know the answers, but choose to keep mum, your head would roll off your neck!"

Answered King Vikram, "The tribal woman was perfectly right in adjudging Arjun as the best archer. Although the blind man and the handless man had achieved great skill in their particular narrow ways, when it came to archery in general, they could not have proved to be much. Arjun, through practice, could achieve their skill, but they could not have achieved Arjun's skill, one being blind and the other handless.

"Arjun and the blind man gave up their plan of visiting the king because they realised that they would fail to impress the king. If a tribal woman of the kingdom could be such an excellent archer, there must be others far more skilled in the art among the professionals and some of them must be in the king's service."

As soon as King Vikram finished answering, the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





VEER HANUMAN

As the day grew, the battle between the demons and the Vanaras grew more and more fierce. The demons were fighting with great gusto. Their wicked tricks and brutal ways of killing their adversaries spread a temporary panic among the Vanaras. Of course, the Vanaras never failed to make an excellent use of trees and stones against the heavy weapons used by the demons.

A long time passed without any party losing ground to the other. However, the demons seemed to be determined to crush the Vanaras. They resorted to a variety of mischief and treachery. They roared and yelled at the pitch of their voice and tried to terrify the

Vanaras. The demons seemed to grow more and more furious.

Rama who was keeping an alert eye on the course of the battle, decided to restore to the Vanaras their lost courage. He made a daring dash into the very centre of the horde of demons and discharged arrows of fire towards them. In a moment the demons began to run helter-skelter. Rama's arrows, like lightning, struck numerous demons dead.

"These are indeed strange arrows," observed someone who was by Rama's side.

"Yes, Lord Shiva excepting, nobody knows the use of these arrows," Rama told his lieutenants.

At this phase of the battle





great many demons lost their lives. As the news of their death reached the interior of the fort, the demonesses wailed loud and long. Wives and mothers of the dead began to lament their fate, all the while making Surpanakha responsible for the whole episode. It was because of her that Ravana kidnapped Sita. And their intuition said that one who harassed the pure and truthful Sita has to pay with his life. Hence they were full of remorse thinking of the future of Lanka.

Ravana realised that his camp was fast getting demoralised. He addressed the commanders of his army and said, "In no

time can I reduce our enemy to lumps of clod. I can send such arrows which will darken the sky and the earth. The enemy will find no way to escape. How much do the human beings understand of my prowess?"

Riding a chariot drawn by eight horses and followed by his ablest serving lieutenants, Ravana advanced towards the Vanaras. And soon he was found killing them ruthlessly.

Ravana's move created a sort of chaos among the Vanaras. Sugriva asked Sushena to re-organise the soldiers. Then he gave a fierce battle to Ravana's followers, in order to divert the demon-king's attention to him.

Virupaksha, one of Ravana's ablest generals, rushed forward, riding an elephant, to face Sugriva. He shot a number of fearful arrows at Sugriva. But before the arrows could touch him, Sugriva jumped down from his chariot and uprooted a huge tree with which he attacked the elephant. The animal took a few steps backward and fell down, dead.

Virupaksha who had got off the elephant, attacked Sugriva with a long sword. Both were locked in a terrible fight. Sug-



riva, with incredible swiftness in handling the sword, soon wounded his adversary fatally. Virupaksha fell down and breathed his last.

Ravana fumed in anger at the death of Virupaksha. He sent Mahodara to take up the place of the fallen Virupaksha. Mahodara ran towards Sugriva with a thunderous roar. Sugriva was prepared for it. With lightning strokes of his sword, he succeeded in cutting down all the horses of Mahodara's chariot.

Mahodara hopped down and attacked Sugriva with a mace. In time did Sugriva pick up a mace from the chariot that was following him and forestalled Mahodara's design to smash him.

Soon their maces broke. They began to wrestle. After a while both were separated and, each moving backward, surveyed the other with fury. Then, with greater zeal, they jumped at each other and fought with whatever weapon they could lay their hands on.

Suddenly, Mahodara's sword got stuck in the shield of Sugriva. Mahodara struggled to free it. Sugriva did not let the opportunity slip by. He



killed Mahodara.

In another area of the battlefield Mahaparshwa had swooped down upon the soldiers led by Angada. After a while Angada hurled his mace at the demon with such an accuracy of aim that not only Mahaparshwa, but also his charioteer fell down losing consciousness. Gavaksha and Jambavan destroyed his chariot and horses throwing rocks at them.

But Mahaparshwa regained consciousness before long and at once resumed shooting arrows at Gavaksha and Jambavan. Angada who observed the demon's action came rushing at him and threw him down



with a massive blow.

Ravana now headed towards Rama. Although the Vanaras were not his target, he went on killing them mercilessly as he advanced. Rama did not wait for his adversary to reach him. Followed by Lakshmana, he came down to meet him halfway.

It was Lakshmana who attacked Ravana first. But his arrows were rendered ineffective by matching arrows sent by Ravana. Then Ravana took aim at Rama. But not even one of his powerful arrows reached Rama. They were all cut down by Rama's arrows.

Ravana then applied a rare shaft known as the demon's

weapon. But Rama instantly sent forth an equally powerful weapon—the arrow of fire—which completely wrecked the enemy's prize weapon.

One after another Ravana came forward with several powerful arrows—each one charged with a special supernatural power. But Rama sent forth an equally powerful shaft each time and the demon-king's efforts proved futile.

The fight went on for quite some time and Ravana showed signs of exhaustion. Rama therefore refrained from attacking him.

But Lakshmana demolished the standard from Ravana's chariot and killed his charioteer. He also succeeded cutting asunder Ravana's bow.

Lakshmana took a moment's respite during which Vibhishana went forward and killed the horses of Ravana's chariot. The angry Ravana jumped down from his chariot and let fly a deadly shaft at Vibhishana. But Lakshmana stepped forward and stopped the shaft from striking its target.

Ravana prepared to shoot another deadly arrow at Vibhishana. But Lakshmana stood between him and Vibhishana



The furious Ravana bawled, "I wanted to kill Vibhishana. But if you are so eager to die, come on, take it!"

And he shot the arrow.

Rama knew that the new arrow was a terrible weapon and it could hardly be checked by anything short of some occult power. He pointed his finger at the arrow and uttered, "You shall lose your efficacy!"

His words proved a curse and that is why the arrow failed to take Lakshmana's life. Nevertheless, Lakshmana fell down, losing consciousness.

Rama's attention went to the ailing Lakshmana. Ravana did not stop raining arrows on him, but he did not care. He sat down near Lakshmana and looked extremely remorseful. Once he looked up at Hanuman and Sugriva and said, "If you take care of Lakshmana, I can go and put an end to Ravana's life without delay." But he continued to sit near Lakshmana and his followers understood that it was not possible for him to concentrate on the battle as long as Lakshmana lay in that condition.

"O Rama! There is nothing to worry about Lakshmana's state. He will soon regain sense



and vigour," said the physician Sushena. Turning to Hanuman, he said, "Hurry to the Himalayas and get the medicinal plant with which you are already familiar. Lakshmana will recover in no time."

Hanuman instantly flew to the Himalayas. But unable to identify the plant, he again uprooted the entire hillock which was covered by a variety of plants and brought it to the camp. Sushena was happy. He plucked the right plant and squeezed some juice out of it. A few drops of the juice were put into Lakshmana's nostrils. The hero sat up as if fresh after an hour's sleep.

Rama embraced Lakshmana. Tears of joy rolled down his cheeks.

"I am lucky that you recovered. I could hardly have continued with the battle had any greater evil befallen you!" he muttered.

"Brother! Nothing ought to dishearten you. Sita Devi must be rescued. You have also promised the throne of Lanka to Vibhishana. Hence, your only concern should be to kill the demon-king as soon as possible, preferably before the sunset," said Lakshmana.

Rama felt inspired. He picked up his bow and the quiver and faced Ravana. The battle between the two resumed, with Rama standing on the ground and Ravana riding the chariot.

But soon a dazzling chariot

appeared before Rama. The charioteer descended and greeted Rama and introduced himself as Matali. The chariot had been sent by Indra who had also sent his own armour, bow and arrows for Rama's use.

The chariot was studded with gold and precious stones. The top of it was covered with sapphire and it shone like the sun.

"O Rama! This is the chariot which Indra used while waging war against the demons. He has now sent it for you, wishing you all success! And I am at your service," said Matali.

Rama was delighted. He circled the chariot and conveyed his warm welcome to the vehicle. Then he ascended it and faced Ravana. The war entered even a more terrible phase.

Contd.





A CONTEST WITH THE PRINCE!

Amardev, the King of Vijaypur, had two sons, Veerdev and Shursingh.

Upon Amardev's death, Veerdev ascended the throne. Shursingh was most devoted to his elder brother. He helped the new king in many ways.

All on a sudden the general of Veerdev's army died. Veerdev decided upon appointing his younger brother to the vacant post.

But the chief minister told him, "My lord! We have been following a certain method in selecting our generals. According to this hoary tradition, a contest is held among the aspiring candidates. He who wins is appointed to the post."

Veerdev kept quiet, but the minister could feel his mood. "Don't you worry, my lord.

Let there be the traditional contest. Shursingh will emerge victorious," said the minister.

"I am not sure," the king said.

"But I am sure, my lord," said the minister with a meaningful smile.

The king had a great faith in his minister. He allowed the minister to go ahead with the arrangements for the contest.

The contest was duly announced. A number of ambitious men came forward to participate in it. But as soon as they heard that Sudhanyu, a young man who was famous for his braveness and fighting skill, was a contestant, they withdrew. Finally there remained only two candidates, Sudhanyu and Shursingh.

The contest drew a large



crowd. At first there was a wrestling between the two. Both proved equal in strength and tact. Next day there was a contest in archery. Sudhanyu excelled Shursingh.

Veerdev who was anxiously watching the event looked sad. "My lord, tomorrow there will be a contest in fencing. Rest assured that Shursingh will win," the minister whispered in the king's ear.

As scheduled, the fencing took place the next day. Mid-way in the game Sudhanyu's sword broke. Instantly the referee announced, "The contests are over. We are satisfied that Prince Shursingh deserves the post of the general."

Sudhanyu stood stunned. He failed to understand how the sword which had been given to him by the organisers of the

contest broke! Neither could he understand how the weakness of the sword can be taken as his weakness!

He looked at the king, expecting justice from him. But the king was looking on happily at his younger brother being garlanded by the chief courtier.

Sudhanyu then looked at the minister, expecting justice from him. But the minister was seen looking at the sky, as if trying to feel the weather!

Sudhanyu looked at the crowd expecting justice from it. But the crowd was then applauding the prince's victory, for it had already been announced that they would get a sweetmeat each! Sudhanyu suddenly broke into a wild laughter. He hurled away the broken sword and marched out and never looked back.





THE DIVINE FATHER AND THE HUMAN SON!

Long long ago, Yama, the god of death, once felt quite bored with his life. Putting the burden of his office on his assistants, he came to the earth for a holiday.

The beauty of the earth charmed him. The hills and the rivers, the forests and the free breeze seemed to him to be the real source of joy.

While wandering near a park, the god saw a young lady plucking flowers. Suddenly the god found himself in the grip of a strong desire. He wanted to live a human life on the earth for a few years.

He changed into a handsome young man and appeared before the young lady and expressed

his desire to marry her. She led him to her father. The god and the young lady were duly married. Soon thereafter the bride's father died and the god took charge of their household. He was loved well by his wife.

His wife's attention and love were now entirely shifted to the child. Her only relation with the god now was to demand of him more and more things for herself and the child. Indeed, she had no end to her needs and her husband was in pains continuously in trying to satisfy her.

For his livelihood the god had taken to the vocation of a physician. He proved a success and his income was ever on the increase. But his wife's demands



too were ever on the increase. If he neglected to fetch her something she needed, she grew so bitter and chided him so much that he had to flee his home time and again. A time came when he ran away the moment he saw his wife or heard her voice.

One day the god thought that he had had enough taste of the life on earth. Next moment he was back at his old station, between heaven and hell.

His wife searched for him for some days. Then she thought it best to forget him and to properly look after her son's welfare.

When the son—let us call him

Yamkumar—grew up to be a young man, she passed away.

Yamkumar did not know what to do for a livelihood. However, his loving father was feeling concerned for him even from his heavenly abode. One night the god appeared to Yamkumar in his dream and said, "My dear son! You can do what I was doing. My blessings are with you and you will grow famous as a physician. When you are called to treat a patient or the patient is brought to you, just remember me and look at his head. If you see there my figure, do not take up the case, for the patient is sure to die. But if you do not see my figure, give him whatever medicine is at hand. He is bound to recover."

Yamkumar now realised who his father was. He did as advised and soon grew famous as a physician. People saw that whoever was treated by him was cured. The cases which he refused to take up and which were taken up by other physicians were found to be hopeless cases.

He prospered fast and his fame spread far and wide.

It so happened that the princess of the land suddenly took to bed. The court physicians



even failed to diagnose her ailment, what to speak of curing her. A renowned physician from a nearby land confided to the king and the queen that whatever be the nature of their daughter's disease, symptoms suggested that she was not going to live long.

Needless to say, the king and the queen were drowned in sorrow. However, one of the ministers informed the king of Yamkumar and revealed that no patient in his hands had ever died.

The king sent special messengers to bring Yamkumar to the palace. Yamkumar duly arrived and was led into the princess' apartment. He remembered his father and opened his eyes. He was shocked to see his father's figure standing near the head of the princess.

That meant, the princess would die! If Yamkumar failed to cure the princess, the reputation he had built up for himself would be entirely destroyed. Besides, the good king and the crying queen had great expectations from him. Quite disturbed in mind, he looked at the princess. At once his heart was filled with pity and compassion for her. She had al-

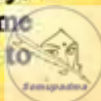


ready suffered too much.

The young physician was enamoured of the beautiful princess and he did not wish her to die.

He requested everybody to leave the chamber for a few minutes. When they did so, he addressed his father and said, "I implore you, kindly refrain from taking away this girl's life. Let me have the pleasure of curing her."

"My son! Better ask me for something else. It is beyond my power to grant a longer life to the princess. Three days from today, precisely at the time of the sunset, she is destined to



die. Just as I cannot take her life a minute before that, so also I cannot delay taking it by a minute," answered the god of death.

"Father, if that particular moment passes without the princess dying?" asked Yamkumar.

"Well, then the girl may enjoy a long life. But, my son, where is the question of that particular moment passing without the princess dying? It just cannot happen like that, to be sure," said the god with a smile of sympathy and added, "My boy, better refuse to take up this case. I am going now. I will reappear at the given time to take away her life."

The god disappeared. But Yamkumar could not leave the princess to her fate. He continued to sit by her side and

nurse her.

Three days passed. The condition of the princess was worsening. At the moment of the sunset Yamkumar saw his father's figure appearing near the princess' chamber.

He greeted the god and shouted, "Mother! Come out. Father has already arrived! Meet him and give him a bit of your mind!"

The god of death's face paled. The bitter memory of his earthly life overwhelmed him. He disappeared instantly.

The fated moment passed. The princess opened her eyes and began to recover.

All were full of Yamkumar's praise.

The king took such a liking for him that before long the princess was married to Yamkumar.





THE MERCHANT'S ADVENTURE

In days of yore there was a merchant in the city of Vaishali. He earned a comfortable living, but he was desirous of growing richer. In fact, he often dreamt of becoming the richest man in the city, overnight if possible!

He was always speculating on the various means of growing rich when, one morning, he heard that the house of one of his neighbours had been burgled. The neighbour, a prosperous merchant, had lost to the burglars almost a million in cash and kind.

Suddenly an idea flashed in the merchant's mind: only if he could burgle the royal treasury, he could live the rest of his

life in peace and happiness.

To begin with, he must learn the art of burglary—he thought. One day, while talking to a beggar, he learnt that the periphery of a certain deserted temple outside the town was the haunt of the burglars at night.

The merchant found out the temple and proceeded there in the early hours of the night. He stretched himself on one side of the veranda and pretended to have fallen asleep.

With a throbbing heart he waited to hear the secrets of burglary. From time to time he opened his eyes to see if anybody had come there. Even the foot-steps of the stray dogs alerted him. Time passed slowly





and it was midnight.

Soon several burglars gathered there. They talked among themselves of their exploits. The merchant realised that one must have courage and presence of mind in order to become a successful burglar. He went to sleep there every night.

The burglars got accustomed to the merchant lying there. They concluded that he must be a homeless tramp.

One night two burglars asked the merchant to get up. One of them said, "Look here, brother, some of our comrades have fallen ill. Two have gone to another part of the town to

gather some important information. It is not proper for only two of us to go out for work. We believe you can guess the nature of our work! If you give us company, we can spend the night profitably. We promise you an equal share in whatever we get!"

The merchant was only waiting for such an opportunity. He accepted the proposal.

The burglars dressed him like a rustic and changed his hairstyle and made him wear a turban. Then they put a load on his head and a piece of cake in his hand.

The merchant now began to feel uneasy. He looked a different man. He could not use his own name as long as he was participating in this operation. It was a novel experience for him.

"Follow us. Do as we do. Do not fear," counselled the burglars.

But the merchant could not help fearing. What would happen if they were caught? His heart-beat grew faster as he brooded over this question.

Suddenly he stepped on a dog. The dog ran away and barked furiously. The merchant threw at it the piece of cake he



held. That silenced the dog.

The taller of the two burglars told him in a suppressed but rough tone, "My dear brother, you are not on your way to your father-in-law's house that you can afford to walk so majestically. There is danger at every step. Walk with alertness!"

The other thief said, "I hope, the barking of the dog has not been heard by any of the guards patrolling the city." Then, addressing the merchant, he said, "In case a guard confronts us, you should keep quiet. We will answer him if necessary."

Hardly had he said this than a guard, mounted on a horse, confronted them.

"Don't you know that it is forbidden to loiter in this area of the town at night? Speak up your business, quick!" the guard demanded.

The merchant was shivering. He felt as if his blood was freezing. "What a business!" he told himself. "One must be afraid of all—right from a dog to the king's guard! I had never known so much fear in my life!"

The second burglar stepped forward. "We are villagers from Rampur. We had come to sell cakes in the suburbs. While returning, we lost our



way in the city. If you kindly show us an inn, we can pass our night there and leave for our village early in the morning," he said in the way of explanation.

"This fellow seems to have fallen asleep while walking," observed the guard pointing his finger at the merchant.

The burglars laughed and said, "You have marked him right, sir! He is in the habit of remaining seated in his shop all the while. He is quite tired of walking with us."

The guard too laughed. He then directed them to a nearby inn and said, "Mind you, I will



visit the inn after an hour to be sure that you are there."

The three then advanced. The merchant was already feeling disgusted with what he had chosen to do himself. "I thought of gaining peace and happiness through burglary. But all my peace and happiness are gone the moment I am out to commit burglary. My condition will be certainly worse after I have committed it!" he told himself.

Now his only desire was to give the slip to his companions.

The three were soon behind a palatial house. The two burglars asked the merchant to stand guard there. "If you see a guard or a group of people coming this way, then clap your hands twice and hide," they told him before scaling the wall.

But the merchant ran away

as soon as the two burglars were out of his sight. Through narrow lanes he reached his house and changed his clothes and went to bed.

Early in the morning his wife woke him up and said, "Last night two burglars were caught red-handed while stealing from a nobleman's house. One of them tried to escape and got killed by the guards. The other one is being led through the street to the magistrate's court."

The merchant came out and looked at the street. He had no difficulty in recognising the burglar who was being dragged along, whipped from time to time. His wife and child were crying and following him.

"Till now I did not know in what peace and happiness I am living!" he murmured to himself.



THE SUN TEMPLE OF KONARAK

Among the most artistically magnificent temples of India is the sun temple of Konarak, standing on the sea-coast of Orissa. It was built by King Narasimha Deva, about seven hundred years ago. According to legends, twelve hundred sculptors, architects and skilled craftsmen worked for twelve years to complete the monument. And the kingdom's revenue of twelve years was spent on it.

The temple was designed to look like a chariot with twenty-four wheels drawn by seven horses - supposed to be the finest figures of horses ever carved out of stone.

What survives is the fore-temple, not the main shrine.





ALNASCHAR'S DREAM

Alnaschar is a poor young man in the *Arabian Nights* who dreamt of marrying the vizier's beautiful daughter. But he knew that he must grow very rich for his desire to be fulfilled. He invested all his money in buying a basketful of glassware which he planned to sell at a profit. With more money gained, he dreamt of greater commerce and more and more profit until he was prosperous enough to marry the vizier's daughter.

As he visualised himself as a proud husband, closing his eyes, he imagined getting angry with his wife and, as her master, giving her a kick. Alas! he threw a real kick inspired by his own thought. Then, opening his eyes, he found that he had broken all his wares! That was the end of his dream.

Alnaschar's Dream thus means a fanciful, unrealistic dream about one's own worth and achievement.





LET US KNOW

Can you kindly give us an outline of the development of the submarines?

Surendra Kumar Machiraju, New Delhi.

Just as imaginative people used to dream of flying by looking at the birds, they must have thought of wandering under the water looking at the fish - since time immemorial. However, the dream must have seemed practicable only after Archimedes (287-212 B.C.) discovered the laws of the floating bodies. He showed that a body plunged in a fluid loses as much of its weight as is equal to the weight of an equal volume of the fluid. It became clear that by increasing and decreasing the weight of the floating body it could be submerged or surfaced.

The first submarine was built by a Dutch inventor, Cornelis Drebbel, in the early 17th century. His boat was propelled by oars emerging out through holes. Soon there were several of them, made by various innovators.

In 19th century were made two significant inventions: the internal combustion engine for surface propulsion and the electric storage battery and motor for submerged propulsion. Then, in 1954 was launched the first nuclear power-driven submarine, "Nautilus".

The use of submarines during the 2nd World War is well known. But the first submarine that was used for war was "The Turtle"—invented by David Bushnel during the American War of Independence. Advancing with a hand-operated propeller, it had tried to sink a British ship!

(Readers are requested not to send new questions for a few months. Let your magazine finish answering at least a part of the backlog of questions.)



CHOOSE A TITLE AND WIN A REWARD

(You are invited to choose a title for the following story and write it down on a post card and mail it to 'Story-title Contest', Chandamama, 283 Arcot Road, Madras 600 026, to reach us by the 20th of November. A reward of Rs. 25. 00 will go to the best entry, which will be published in the January '78 issue. Please do not use the same card for entering the Photo-Caption Contest).



In a certain village lived a couple. The husband and the wife were of one mind in everything. They rivalled each other in only one thing. Each tried to be a greater miser than the other.

One night the woman fell sick. The husband went to call a physician. As he advanced, he told himself, "It is night. The physician will demand double his fees - five rupees." A little later, he told himself again, "It is so cold! He will never agree to come at less than eight rupees." After going another furlong, he told himself, "I have not brought any vehicle with me. The physician will certainly demand ten rupees!"

By then he had reached the physician's house. He knocked at the door. The physician peeped out and asked, "What do you want?"

"Keep your physicianship to yourself. I will not pay ten rupees and not take you home!" shouted the man haughtily and returned.

Back at home, he announced to his wife, "Tonight we are gainer by ten rupees!" And that was such an exciting news that the wife recovered in no time.

Result of Story Title Contest held in September Issue

The prize is awarded to :

Miss Sumana Rao,

**15A/21, W. E. A., Karol Bagh,
NEW DELHI 110005.**

Winnig Entry — 'FURY AND FALLACY'



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. R. S. Nilesakar



Mr. P. C. Othi

These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.

- Rs. 20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 20th NOVEMBER.
- Winning captions will be announced in JANUARY Issue.
- Write your entry on a POST CARD, specify the month, give your full name address, age and post to:

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST
CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINE
MADRAS-600 026.

Result of Photo Caption Contest held in September Issue

The prize is awarded to:

Mrs. V. Lalitha.

C/o. Prabhakara Menon.

Central School,

COCHIN 682 003.

Winning Entry — 'Charm of Collection' — 'Warmth of Affection'



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